

## **A History of Breese**

Joseph Kasson  
All Saints Academy, Breese  
Teacher: Stephanie Garcia

Even though the area around Breese, Illinois, my hometown, was first settled in 1816, it was not until 1835 that Germans came to this town and most of them, devoted their lives to farming because of the flat fertile land they found there.

Twenty years after the German's first immigration, the Mississippi and Ohio Railroad was completed. The early pioneers were enthralled by the thought of transportation by railroad. The Chicago based company Sanger Kamp & Co. bought 80 acres of land near the railroad. Twenty-four acres were laid out with the railroad splitting the original town with some acres on the north side and south side creating Breese Township, February 3, 1855. Today citizens of still Breese use the terms north side and south side in determining a certain location, for example, north side park and south side park. Also most roads in Breese are based on which side of the railroad the street is located; for instance, N. Eleventh Street actually runs east and west but is north of the railroad.

Late in 1855, forty Catholic immigrants, wanting to fulfill their religious needs, had the idea of constructing a church. Their desires were realized when two years later the Sanger Kamp & Co. gave half of one of its 80 acres to the Catholics' project. By December 1869, St. Dominic's Catholic Church was completed.

Breese was first recognized as a town on April 11, 1871, and later became a village on September 23, 1876. As a result, the construction of the village hall had begun. This project was completed in 1885. Seven years later a volunteer fire department was

organized. The ever-growing population was then acknowledged as a city on January 19, 1905. The mayor of this new city was Henry Hummert.

Realizing that Breese would need some improvements, the mayor authorized the construction of an electric light plant that was completed in 1906. The streets of Breese were also topped with road oil in 1911. The next year improvements to the city's water works facility were also made.

However, things took a turn for the worst when, in 1914, a scarlet fever swept the community and its surrounding area and forced all the schools to close. Only four years later, still in the wake of the scarlet fever, the flu epidemic spread through the area.

After the diseases ended, further improvements to the city were made. And, for all of the years up to the present, and for years to come, developments will be made and the population will grow, ensuring the citizens a healthy and delightful lifestyle. [From Breese Sesquicentennial Pictorial History 2006, Breese Historical Society Committee. Breese Journal and Publishing Company; Breese Quasquicentennial 1856-1981; City of Breese. Breese Illinois-Proud of our Past... Planning for our Future. Breese Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with City of Breese; Arthur Charles Cole, *The Era of the Civil War* Springfield Illinois: Illinois Centennial Commission, 1919; Jamie Litteken, "St. Dominic's Church." *Illinois History Magazine* 2004, <[www.cis.org/articles/1996/illinois.html](http://www.cis.org/articles/1996/illinois.html)> Shaping Illinois: The effects of immigration, 1970-2020 by Leon F. Bouvier and Rosemary Jenks, (Sept. 12, 2007).]